



FOR TOOTH CARE . . . Dan McLayne, president of the Torrance Dental Health Assn., accepts \$1,000 check from Lions Club President Fred Boren (right) during luncheon meeting of the club Tuesday. Boren reminded club members that most of the Torrance dentists participated in the program of providing tooth care to the city's children at reduced costs. (Herald Photo)

A Closer Look

By Ernest Kreiling

HOLLYWOOD — Laughter feeds on itself and starves quickly without a steady supply. And very little comedy can endure long without immediate audience response, a fact television comedians and directors learned years ago. Going a step further, the more people who laugh at a joke the funnier it is. If you doubt this try an experiment. Pick your best and newest joke and tell it to one or two people. Note their reaction. Then tell the same story to a group of four or more people and note the degree of their response. You'll almost invariably find the story was much funnier to the larger group.

IT'S A VERY old and very simple principle, but one that in the early days of television posed some problems, especially when the medium turned away from live performances to film. The funniest situations and gags somehow fell flat when seen and heard privately in our living room where there were only a few people to laugh. Two solutions emerged to the problem of priming the pump of our private risibilities. One was "canned laughter," that much maligned technique of dubbing in the sound of laughter from stock sound tracks. The other was the "three camera show," a unique and interesting Hollywood development.

WHICH PROGRAMS are done which way? It's pretty hard to tell if you don't have prior information. For example, have you noticed any difference between the laughter on the Beverly Hillbillies and the Dick Van Dyke Show?

Hillbillies has the "canned laughter"; Van Dyke the real live laughter of 300 people watching as the program is being filmed. The term "three camera" derives simply from the fact that three cameras simultaneously film the entire performance from three angles. Later the film editor splices selected shots from the three strips of film together to provide the viewers a variety of angles and to protect the best comedic effect.

The three camera technique was developed by Desi Arnaz and it was born of the simple fact that Lucille Ball performed much better before live audiences than in the semi-privacy of the sound stage. Today the fact that comedians generally give sharper performances before an audience is a prime reason most situation comedies are produced this way. But another paramount reason is the fact that better comedy emerges when the studio laughter is actually that evoked by the lines and action we see at home.

JERRY PARIS, who performs both as Jerry and the next door neighbor and as frequent director of the Dick Van Dyke

Show, told me, "The cast performs according to the response they get from the audience. They can stall on a big laugh or fill in quickly if the laugh doesn't materialize. In other words there's no guess work about the laughs. They're real."

"This type of program is a team comedy effort, where the cast plays off of each other and the audience," he added. "The dubbed laughter program belongs to the film editor, because he decides how long and how loud people should have or would have laughed if they'd been there."

Subsequent parts of this series will discuss how the zany Van Dyke cast goes about preparing for their weekly show, how the cameras rehearse, and the role the audience plays in making the program funnier for us at home.

Watson Says Firms Miss Assessments

County Assessor Philip E. Watson said Monday that a business division will be forced to enter its own assessments against those firms that haven't returned their business personal property affidavits.

Starting immediately, business division deputies will be sent to such firms to make assessor's estimates.

Watson suggests that these non-complying taxpayers return their affidavits immediately if they wish to avoid a visit from his deputies.

The business division has processed some 158,000 business property statements to date, Watson said. However, some 8,000 firms failed to meet the April 15 extended deadline for mailing back their forms.

Companies are reminded that the affidavits must be signed by an officer of the firm. Accountants' signatures are not acceptable.

Library Sets 'Red Balloon'

"The Red Balloon," will be shown at the Torrance Library, 1545 Post, Saturday, at 10:30 a.m. This half-hour film is the story of the friendship of a boy and a large red balloon. The color shots of Paris add background to the tale.

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